



PRESS RELEASE

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COVERED CALIFORNIA JOINS PARTNERSHIP AIMED AT REDUCING UNNECESSARY MEDICAL CARE

“Choosing Wisely” Helps Doctors and Patients Make Better Choices, Cuts Waste, and Makes Health Care More Affordable

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — Covered California™ will partner with “Choosing Wisely,” a partnership of the American Board of Internal Medicine (ABIM) Foundation, Consumer Reports, and leading national medical societies to encourage discussions between patients and their physicians about unnecessary procedures and treatments that are driving up health care costs and often causing harm.

At its May 23 meeting, the Covered California board approved a resolution to join the Choosing Wisely Consumer Partnership, a shared-decision-making initiative launched to help doctors and patients make effective choices.

Peter V. Lee, Executive Director of Covered California, said, “Choosing Wisely provides specific, evidence-based recommendations to help physicians and patients make wise decisions about appropriate care based on individual situations. The campaign reduces duplication and waste and makes sure each patient gets the right care for them.”

The campaign fits in with the mission of the newly created insurance exchange to streamline health care delivery, control costs and encourage more people to get the health care they need. “Choosing Wisely is a prime example of engaging consumers directly in decisions about their care,” Lee said.

The ABIM Foundation reports that up to 30 percent of medical screenings and treatments are duplicative or unneeded and may not improve people’s health.

Twenty-five medical specialty societies, representing more than 725,000 physicians, listed more than 130 tests and procedures that are commonly ordered, not always necessary, and could cause undue harm, according to the foundation.

(More)

The procedures include labor induction and cesarean deliveries, feeding tubes for patients with advanced dementia, CT scans of children's minor head injuries, electroencephalograms (EEGs) performed on patients with recurrent headaches, and procedures for treating infants with acid reflux.

The lists are being distributed to physicians and are reaching millions of patients nationally through consumer and advocacy partners, including Consumer Reports, the world's largest independent product-testing organization. These groups are supporting the project with programs aimed at educating the public about unnecessary tests or treatments.

For a complete list of procedures and participating societies and associations, go to www.ChoosingWisely.org.

About Covered California

California was the first state to create a health benefit exchange following the passage of the federal health care law. Covered California is charged with creating a new insurance marketplace in which individuals and small businesses can get access to health insurance. With coverage starting in 2014, Covered California will help individuals compare health insurance plans and choose the plan that works best for their health needs and budget. Financial help will be available from the federal government to help reduce costs for people who qualify on a sliding scale. Small businesses will be able to purchase competitively priced health plans and offer their employees the ability to choose from an array of plans and may qualify for federal tax credits. Covered California is an independent part of state government whose job is to make the new market work for California's consumers. It is overseen by a five-member board appointed by the Governor and Legislature. For more information on Covered California, please visit www.CoveredCA.com.

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